

The Knowing Element by Luang Poo Tate, at Wat Hin Mark Peng

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Unlike “Knowing in Time¹”, having “knowing trailing²” will get you nowhere. When you “Know in Time”, you will keep pace with all phenomena.

In the eloquent words of Ajahn Dune (Atulo) he said “Citta is Buddha”. He was speaking with simplicity and what he meant was “Citta and Buddha are the same”. Buddha is not the individual Self-Enlightened being.

Buddha, in this sense, refers to “Citta being Buddha”.

Buddha translates as “the One Who Knows” but it is not the individual Sammā Sambuddha or Sappañña³.

“Buddha” means Citta. When the Citta is that which thinks, which reasons, which imagines everything conceivable, it is possible for knowledge to arise. This is why thinking, reasoning and feeling all sorts of things is referred to as “Citta is Buddha”. The matter of the Sammā Sambuddha is something altogether different.

This is why I came up with the novel approach of differentiating the Citta and the Heart. If one reaches the Heart, there are none of these mental activities. There is just a steady equilibrium. There is an awareness of this impartial state but there are no thoughts or imaginings. This is what is Buddha. This is Buddha i.e., Knowingness. Or you can refer to it as the “Knowing⁴ Element”.

That which is aware of various objects knows conventional reality⁵. If the pinnacle of the “Knowingness” is reached, there is nothing else to speak of. What is reached is called the “Knowing Element”. However, the “Knowing Element” is still aware of conventional reality. The conventional, worldly knowing is aware and in sync with the “Knowing Element”. To put it simply, nothing exists save for the “Knowing Element”. Even the time of the Lord Buddha passing into Parinibbana is referred to a Nibbana Dhatu⁶. This natural state, when it happens, is referred to as the “Knowing Element”. Nibbana is known as Nibbana Dhatu⁷.

This is why I adopted another convention, which is: The “Knowing Element” (or Knowingness) is one thing. That which it knows is another⁸. When (the Citta) withdraws from the Knowingness (the Heart) it comes to understand various other things. This is called Paññā. This Paññā arises from deliberation and reasoning, from thinking and examining all sorts of matters. Paññā emerges when the “Knowing

¹ Being aware of phenomena as they occur.

² Being aware of phenomena after they have occurred.

³ Wisdom.

⁴ A less literal translation would be, the basic/fundamental quality of Knowing.

⁵ The worldly truth where supposition dominates, where people describe and give names to objects while losing sight of the object's fundamental qualities. A conventional view of reality that includes the misconception of “I” and “me”.

⁶ The element of Nibbana. Perhaps it is better to think of Nibbana as fundamental rather than an element.

⁷ From this statement it can be inferred that the pinnacle of the “Element of Knowing” and Nibbana and Nibbana Dhatu are synonymous. However, the pinnacle is only achieved after the defilements (Kilesa) have been cleansed from the “Element of Knowing”.

⁸ This is referring to a time when the “Element of Knowing” is the Heart and not yet cleansed of defilement and therefore not at its pinnacle of purity.

Element” is leveraged to produce wisdom. Paññā arises when the “Knowingness” transforms into the Citta.

There are two types of Paññā, Lokiya or mundane and Lokuttara, Supramundane.

Lokiya Paññā means thoughts, embellishments and contemplations about everything under the sun. The complete array of Saññā Āramana⁹. It knows all sorts of things. However, it is ignorant of the “Knowing Element”. It goes off thinking, reasoning and embellishing¹⁰ endlessly. It never stops, not even for a moment. This is why worldly, human beings are caught up in a whirlwind of confusion. Caught up in one hundred and eight thousand brands of chaos. This is Lokiya Paññā.

Lokuttara Paññā is reserved for the those who have trained and developed the Citta, the one who knows. The one that knows, that thinks and reasons with Sati protecting it. A Citta under the control of Sati knows all there is to know. The Citta under the authority of Sati can be made to know or it can be made to not know. It’s knowing can keep pace with all thoughts and mental machinations, seeing these for what they are.

Train the Citta and have it stay under the authority and protection of Sati. Training in, and the practice of, Dhamma Vinaya is purely for the development of the Citta and nothing else. What else is there to train if not the Citta? We must train the Citta. When I talk about the Citta and training the Citta, it is so you will train it to be under the authority of Sati. At the same time, train in (sense) restraint. Every embodiment of the Three Signs of Being, that is, Aniccaṃ Dukkhaṃ and Anattā, will then be known in their entirety.

When Aniccaṃ Dukkhaṃ and Anattā are present, there is no end to thinking, embellishing and imagining. These activities are never exhausted. However, when we let go of¹¹ Aniccaṃ Dukkhaṃ and Anattā, at that time (the Citta) transforms back to the “Heart”. It does this all by itself. When it has had its fill of investigating (the Citta) will, of its own accord, return to the stillness of the “Heart”.

When this state ceases, (the Citta) again seeks the various Āyatana. It comes back into the domain of Aniccaṃ Dukkhaṃ and Anattā. As it investigates further, (the Citta) will again return to its origin, that is “the One Who Knows” aka “the Knowing Element”. This process must be repeated time and time again until one has mastered the art of investigation. There will, then, come a time when Aniccaṃ Dukkhaṃ and Anattā are not seen by inference or coercion but are seen spontaneously.

In the beginning, Aniccaṃ Dukkhaṃ and Anattā have to be investigated by inference. Later, when investigation has been mastered, it will occur automatically. This is why I say that the Buddhist religion is the summit of ideas and knowledge. It penetrates the Truth. It reaches “the One Who Knows”.

This is why Luang Por¹² Dune said the Citta is the same as “the One Who Knows”. He was speaking specifically about the Citta. In reality, the Citta and the Heart are one and the same¹³. Whatever the Citta is, that’s the Heart. Luang Poo Dune said the same. When the Heart has been accessed¹⁴, this is

⁹ Saññā Āramana: All objects experienced through the six senses.

¹⁰ Embellishing experiences in the present by thoughts, hopes and fantasies.

¹¹ This is referring to the temporary release that is afforded by Samādhi and not the final release achieved by enlightenment.

¹² A polite title for an aging monk.

¹³ Mental energy at work and at rest. It is the same mental energy, just different aspects of it.

¹⁴ This refers to the Heart purified of defilements, not the Heart in used as a resting place for an investigating Citta.

the finale of Buddhism. There is no more to be done. There is nothing other than the Citta and the Heart. “The One Who Knows” knows that arriving at (a pure) Heart is the job done.

Consider this most carefully, Buddhism advocates the development of Samādhi that ends up at a Citta that is a singularity¹⁵. Ñāṇa¹⁶ ends up at a Citta that is a singularity. Maggasamaṅgī¹⁷, that is Magga Phala Nibbāna, is a singularity too. The Citta that is Ekaggatā is also reduced to a singularity. So, what is the difference? The difference between these various experiences is the amount of Paññā and the extent of the knowledge associated with each. Our Lord Buddha’s knowledge was extensive. He knew all there was to know, in intricate detail. He knew about cause and effect. He knew about our nature. He knew about arising and passing away. This is why He is beyond intellect, beyond words, beyond all experiences. This is why He is said to be beyond worlds.

The abode of everything that is referred to as worldly is actually the Citta. But, for all its activity, the Citta is clueless about what really goes on. This is why the Lord Buddha rose above these things, that is, above mental activities. In other words, His knowing kept pace with these things and so He knew them for what they were. When I say, “kept pace” I mean that He knew the instance any mental activity occurred. He knew, simultaneously, all the thoughts and imagining as they happened. He knew in sync with these mental activities, no more, no less, no shortfall. This is why this is called “knowing in time” as opposed to “knowing trailing”. “Knowing trailing” means seeing things after the event. There is, therefore, a lag between the activity occurring and the knowing and the understanding of it. A lag between that activity and the awareness of its significance. This is trailing knowledge. This is like tracking a cow or a buffalo but you never see its body. When the time comes that you actually see it in real-time, only then are you are certain of what it is. When you “know” at the same time (as phenomena occur), this is “Knowing in time” or “Keeping Pace”. This is what I am referring to.

Unlike “Knowing in Time”, having “knowing trailing” will get you nowhere. When you “Know in Time”, you will keep pace with all phenomena.

The Lord Buddha was aware of all phenomena as they happened. This is why He is said to know the true state of being human. As such, this was all that needed to be done. As for the rest of us who practise and train, we have not yet achieved this speed of awareness and understanding so we must persevere with our training.

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¹⁵ It has no external object. It is beyond the duality of the conventional world.

¹⁶ Knowledge and insight.

¹⁷ The coalescing of all eight path factors into Right View, in a single moment.

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